# First You Have to Have a Vision City of Ypsilanti, Michigan

Vision + Determination
Builds "Hipsilanti"

#### Ypsilanti = Hipsilanti

- Dr. Cheryl C. Farmer, Mayor City of Ypsilanti
- William D. Kinley, Owner
   Phoenix Contractors, Inc. and Ypsilanti
   Downtown Development Authority Member
- Jennifer Albaum, Owner henrietta fahrenheit

#### Ypsilanti's Glorious Legacy



- History creates a unique diverse community
- Star-crossed paths of commerce – Huron River and Indian Trail
- The "Ypsilanti" Greek connection
- The Railroad

#### Ypsilanti's Rich Heritage



- Civil War and Underground Railroad
- The Normal School opens in 1857 EMU
- Advent of auto industry by Henry Ford
- World War II "Arsenal for Democracy"

## Recent History of Neglect and Decline

- Neighborhood housing transitions to rental housing
- The "malling of America" storefront vacancies
- Outward growth of the University
- Growth in public housing/poverty/crime
- Closing of Ypsilanti State Hospital adds to perception of danger
- Public infrastructure deteriorates with no plan for improvement

#### Downtown Business Decline



#### Downtown Business Decline



## Visioning Together: Capitalize on the Positives

- Depot Town's mini-renaissance: artists as urban pioneers
- Downtown Development Authority leadership on Hyett-Palma study in early 1990s
- City Council leadership: Annual visioning sessions with City department heads initiated in 1996
- Defined areas of agreement
- Looked for root causes of decline and set plan for action
- Review goals annually

#### City Hall Sets the Example

- Building and infrastructure improvements
- Reorganize departments for efficiency/customer service
- Build culture of truthful communication/transparency
- Commit to engaging the community
- Strengthen building/development codes and enforcement
- Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance updates
- New Huron River Park Corridor Master Plan reenergizes Frederick Law Olmstead Plan

#### Cool City Successes and Projects



- Historic Depot Town district
- Old Ypsi High School senior apartment living
- Downtown revitalization
- West Cross Street plan
- Water Street neighborhood development

### Depot Town District Thrives



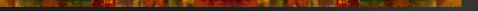
### Depot Town District Thrives



#### Senior Living in Old Ypsi High



#### Water Street: Downtown Living





#### Site Location

The Witter Steet Weighburhood Site consists of approximately 38.4 set acres. It is bookered as the north by likelying Asserts on the sauth by first Street, and on the sauth must be sufficiently seed by the Huter Siver. It contains 39 separate parcells 35 of which are physically owned with the terraturing these publishy owned one. Properly bleethoution Section for more informative on each parcell. The site is less than, a tell viriable soils to both Downtons and Depot Four.





#### Water Street: Downtown Living



#### Concept Plan: Detail



#### Total Number of Order 872 wets

#### Commercial

1 Restauriet Pad Opportunity to convert residential units along Michigan Avenue to Retail Office

#### Open Span

#### Total Open Space: 8.55 Acres



A Planned Unit Development Felia

#### Water Street: Downtown Living



Die Verer Street Design Chamitie, January 26 - Fritzung 1, 2002.

The Development Strategy also cuttlend the objectives and idealy philosophy is all Pulsartative concept plant. Smiller to the Harris River Contains Master Flex, the Water Street Development Strategy addressed the City's goals for a switalized, attaction, other neighborhood wife the potential to encourage new, dignificant investment and growth in the active Dovertows seen. In 2001 the City, seed the Development Strategy and its accompanying concept plan as the listed for leaving a Request For Qualification for developers interested in partnering with the City is realised plant the City Seed of

In Navember of 2001, after a long and sends selection process. Elitrode Properties Corporation was selected, as the Water Steet Preferred Developer? Widing slitgards with the City as a time public-printing pathograph with the City as a time public-printing the City's selection, a design character, such held in late January of 2002, taking the Development Steeling and its concept plan to a long-park tree of detail.

#### Design Charrette

The term "rherotte" electrics from the French term for "little cast" and others to the final intense work effort, and other to the final intense work effort, the final protection of the final protection are also as the final protection are also with title casts to soften final drawings, and students social party in the sharests to put finishing touches on their presentation minutes before they described.

A charvete provides a forum for ideas and offers the unique scharzage of giving transciste feedback to ideaspees while giving mutual authoritip to the plan by all those who pertaipable.

The Winter Street themselve was specifically organized to encourage participation by everyone observed in the analong of the Water Street angillation house, so that of Sactions were represented including gloversmental, developmental and the general public.



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## Ypsilanti Downtown: Evolution of a Business District

■ The Heyday 1940 to 1960

Thriving area industry

The Long Slide 1960 to 1980

Malls arrive, social services develop

■ The Seeds of Renewal 1980 to 1990

Business owners and City team up

The Mood Change 1990 to 2000

Public investment spurs private investment

The Acceleration 2000 to Present

Private investment spurs public investment

#### Public Efforts and Funding

- Formed Downtown Development Authority and Tax Increment Financing District
- Adopted Main Street program
- Encouraged and funded commercial façade improvements
- Commissioned Hyett-Palma Study for downtown redevelopment
- Purchased Masonic Temple building and adjacent lot
- Supported Riverside Arts Center development in Masonic Temple
- Installed streetscape improvements
- Installed Michigan Avenue boulevard
- Committed to development of Water Street area

#### Former Masonic Temple



#### Michigan Avenue Streetscape



#### Water Street Redevelopment

#### The Mew

This small theractor area is shaded in the northwest portion of the Water Seven resighteethread. The Moves acts as a production street that extends off of Mediagac Associaand Fast a market extension that leach lasts treated the even. The harms a slong the Means front the pockether wides with insting porthers and perchangases.





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#### Water Street Redevelopment







#### Private Efforts and Funding

- Property owners form DDA with City
- 2 mill operating funding for downtown supported
- Commercial building facades are improved
- Volunteers form Riverside Arts Center and commit to long-term support
- Building renovation/reuse investment begins
- Retail/entertainment businesses open in downtown
- Biltmore Properties commits to Water Street project
- Purchase/plans accelerate for loft/business reuse

### Private Redevelopment Efforts







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### Residential Loft Living



### Residential Loft Living



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## Arts & Entertainment Districts: The Arts

- Hyett-Palma Downtown Study Guides Efforts
- Riverside Arts Center Community Arts Venue
  - Formed by private initiative with public support
  - Funded by public and private sources
  - Intended as multi-arts economic attractor
  - Operates with committed volunteers as non-profit organization
  - Theater user groups formed in response to availability
  - Year-round generator of downtown activity by patrons/users

#### Riverside Arts Center



#### Riverside Arts Center Plaza



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#### Riverside Arts Center: Club Level



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### Arts & Entertainment: Entertainment and Nightlife

- Seven bar/music/show venues along Washington Street
- Evening foot traffic very high
- Businesses successful and expanding
- Customer demographics: 21 to 34 age group
- Downtown builds reputation as nightlife destination

#### Entertainment/Nightlife

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### Entertainment/Nightlife



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### Entertainment/Nightlife



### Ypsilanti Today: Are We Cool Yet?



#### Changing Perceptions

- Residential desirability
- Business potential
- Geographic Necessity
  - Expansion from all directions
  - Transportation ease
- Economic Reality
  - Moderate real estate costs
  - Limited municipal funds

## Ypsilanti Today: Signs of Coolness

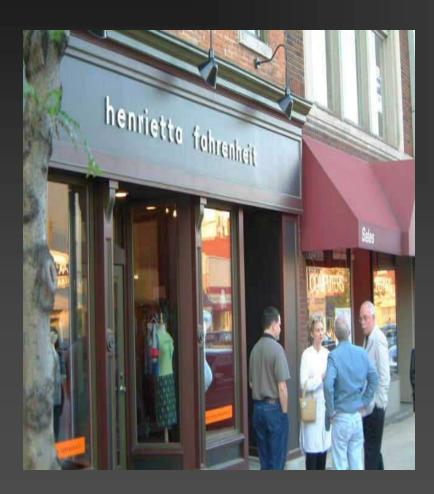


- Appeal to 21-35 ages
- Arts and entertainment venues
- Tech-related job creation
- Relative affordability
- "THERE'S A CHILL IN THE AIR"

#### henrietta fahrenheit



#### henrietta fahrenheit



- A creative business venture
- Supporting community
  - designers
  - customers
  - artists/musicians
  - other businesses

# Supporting Community: The Designers



- Collection of independent designers
- DIY ethic includes network and support
- Portland, Maine to Portland, Oregon

# Supporting Community: The Designers



## Supporting Community: The Customers



- It's a VIBE, a MENTALITY
  - Exploration adventure discovery
  - Support and respect

# Supporting Community: The Customers



## Supporting Community: Artists and Musicians



- Local artists' work on display
- Sponsorship of music events/festivals
- Sell fee-free tickets to concerts

## Supporting Community: Other Businesses

Mentoring and practical support

Connect and form relationships

Offer/return generosities

### Why Ypsilanti?



#### Customer population untapped/virtually ignored

- City and surrounding townships
- University population
- Other area downtowns developed

#### Beyond the obvious

- Offers the unexpected
- Burgeoning creative scene
- Open, supportive community

## What Can You Take Back to Your Communities?



- Micro level Businesses
  - dynamic merchant's association
- Local level City Officials
  - regulations that reinforce the vision
- All levels Designers,
   Planners, Merchants,
   Officials
  - Push the edge
  - "Cool" = Unique

#### Ypsilanti = Hipsilanti

For more information contact:

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